Nature*Kenya*, The EANHS, *Action for Biodiversity Conservation*

Newsletter

Celebrating 90 Years

MARCH, 1999

NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIBRARY

Membership

640

Members
(At time of print)

THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS - INTRODUCE YOUR SOCIETY TO FRIENDS!

ACTIVITIES

'The Life of Birds' NEW David Attenborough Series

The Ornithology Department continues to screen this magnificent new David Attenborough series 'The Life of Birds' each Wednesday afternoon over the next month. These video presentations are for Ornithology staff but Nature Kenya members are welcome to attend. All videos will be shown in the Natural Sciences Seminar Room from 2-3 p.m.

PROGRAMME:

24 February - 'Meat-eaters'
3 March - 'Fishing for a living'
10 March - 'Signals and songs'
17 March - 'Finding partners'
24 March - 'The demands of the egg'
31 March - 'The problems of parenthood'
7 April - 'The limits of endurance'

90th Anniversary Jubilee

(see pg. 4 for brief Society retrospective)

Thursday 25 March, 5:30 p.m.
Louis Leakey M.Hall, NMK

Provisional Programme
5:30 p.m. Enjoy a glass of wine
6:00 p.m. Various speakers to highlight their experience as members of the society and the role of the society.
6:45 p.m. Break
7:00 p.m. Speakers continue
7:30 p.m. Drinks and snacks are served while dance floor opens with golden oldies.

A vehicle will be available for those needing a ride to town.

YOUR INVITATION

On March 25 1909 a group of scientists and amateur naturalists convened to form the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society.

We will commemorate the 90th year of the Society with a member gathering to which you are warmly invited.

It will be held on Thursday 25 March at the Louis Leakey M. Hall in the National Museums, Nairobi from 5:30 p.m.

World Birdwatch 2 – 3 October 1999

More information in the April newsletter.

Wednesday Morning Birdwalks: Bird-watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 am. Return about 12:30 p.m.

EXCURSIONS

COAST MEMEBERS REGIONAL ACTIVITY
Saturday 13 March

Tour the Bamburi North Quarry Forest Trail including the Butterfly Farm.

Meet 9:00 a.m. at the North Quarry Forest Trail Gate. The gate has a butterfly painting. Entry fee is 70/-. Bring water and packed lunch.

Pot Luck Outings
Bird-watching outings held on every third Sunday of the month, *i.e.* 21 March. Bring a picnic lunch, binoculars, field guides, *etc.* and meet at 9:00 am at the National Museum car park. Those attending decide on the venue - hence "Pot Luck".

BIRDWATCHING AT HYRAX HILL

Saturday 6 March, 9:00 a.m.

Nature Kenya members are invited to this outing in Nakuru by the Bird Society of Egerton University (BISEU) who are institutional society members and have organised the outing for their members and some Wildlife Clubs.

Trip to Lake Elementaita Lodge Ranch on Saturday 20 March. Leaves the Museum car park at 0800hrs. Bring water, packed lunch, good walking shoes and binoculars. To sign up contact the EANHS office. Anticipated entry fee to the ranch is 300/-.

Members from Naivasha, Nakuru and Njoro, first, let us know you are coming (mail or email), and meet us at the ranch!

KENYA MUSEUM SOCIETY

ARTS FESTIVAL
Friday 5 - Sunday 7 March

With the theme 'Technology Past, Present and Future: the National Museums of Kenya in the Millennium', this Arts Festival will involve the whole Museum.

Special features include live demonstrations of ethnographic heritage and the 'cyber hut' with live internet link-up with US students

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Easter at Marich Pass
Friday 2- Wednesday 7 April

Accommodation is still available but, if you are thinking of booking do it today! Space is limited.

For those of you who have already booked the deadline for payment is Monday 8 March. After this date no booking will be maintained.

We look forward to seeing you on what promises to be an exciting safari.

Following are points, which answer the most common inquiries received:

1. Cost of banda 4800/-, dormitory 4200/- per person sharing or camping 3800/- includes 3 meals.
   Minivan per person: 5250/-
2. Sheets, blankets, mosquito nets, soap, toilet paper are provided. Towels are not.
3. There is a petrol station at Sigor, 7 kms from MPFSC, which is open daily and supplies regular petrol, diesel, paraffin and motor oils.
4. Directions: Nairobi-Nakuru-Eldama Ravine-Nyaru-Eldoret-Iten road. After 5 km turn left onto a minor road (passes the Chepkiolel Campus of Moi Univ.)-Ziwa-Cherangani-Sibanga (noted on sign post) turn right on to a half finished tarmac road for 9 km to join the main A1 Kitale - Lodwar road. Turn right at junction and head north through Makutano/ Kapenguria and then down the escarpment for 70 km to Marich Pass just out on the plains. The turning to the Centre is a couple of hundred metres past the Marich Police post on the right.
5. The alternative route would be to travel to Kapenguria on main road via Eldoret and Kitale.

SUBCOMMITTEES

FRIENDS OF THE NAIROBI ARBORETUM:
FONA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday 8 March at 5:15 p.m -
At the Louis Leakey Auditorium, National Museum.

Arboretum guided Tree Walks on the last Monday of every month i.e. 29 March from 9:30 a.m.
Meet at the new FONA offices beside the Girl Guides HQ.

SUCCULENTA:

PLANT AND BOOK SALE at Maria Dodd's house, No. 84 Nandi Road, Karen on Saturday, 6 March, 2 p.m. Guest speaker -Erica Mann on 'Traditional Medicinal Trees of the Bukus people in Bungoma District'. Please bring contributions for tea.

ARABUKO SOKOKE (COAST)

Forest walks every last Wednesday of the month i.e. 31 March. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Gede Forest Station, on the Mombasa - Malindi Road.

BIRD WALKS on the first Saturday of each month ie. 6 March. Starting at 6:30 a.m. from the Gede Forest Station, these birdwalks are organised by the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association.

SOCIETY NOTICES

The EANHS Bulletin...

Is published for members' articles so if you have visited some exciting location, have made noteworthy observations or are involved in natural history research please write and tell other members about it. Articles can be sent to the office or direct to the Hon. Editor by email - ladepew@africaonline.co.ke

WIN GUIDE BOOKS TO ARABUKO SOKOKE FOREST AND KAKAMEGA FOREST

Give a name for this newsletter, and you could be the winner to two excellent guide books.

Some of the entries to date are

The Eagle by Fleur Ng'weno
The Raptor by Shailesh Patel
Winged Words by Dorrie Brass
Grassroots Gossip, Nature News
Natural News, Earth News
The Eagle's Eye, The Really Wild News
The Green Times, Footprints
The Paw Print, by Sarah Higgins

You may send your entries by mail, fax or email but **not by phone.**

FUNDAMENTALS OF ORNITHOLOGY COURSE

This is an intensive week-long field course, targetted at professional bird guides but suitable for any birders wanting to improve their skills. The aim is to develop participants' field identification techniques and their understanding of the lives of birds.

This year's course is the fifth so far and will take place from 22 - 29 April 1999 at Elsamere Field Studies Centre, Naivasha. For the first time it is being jointly organised by the National Museums, Department of Ornithology and Nature Kenya. Participants should have some birding experience and at least KCSE education (include a CV when applying for a place). The course fee (all inclusive) is Ksh 18,000. Successful participants receive a Certificate in Ornithology issued by the National Museums. Places are strictly limited and usually fill up quickly, so early application is advisable! To apply, or for more details, contact Anthony Kuria at the Nature Kenya office.

A Spanish Birdwatching Holiday

'Facinas Natural', a Spanish tour and environmental education company, are offering a six day birdwatching holiday for 48000 pesetas per person, applicable during March, April and May. At this time it is possible to watch thousands of storks, black and royal kites, honey buzzards, booted and golden eagles, ospreys, Egyptian and Griffon vultures, bee-eaters and many other species.

Contact:FACINAS NATURAL
c/ Divina Pastora, no. 6 Facinas. CP: 11391. CADIZ.
Email: mariangallmon@hotmail.com

THE EANHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 10 MAY

Nomination forms available from the office

TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

The TBA 1999 newsletter is also due for March! All alumni are therefore requested to update their records on their current activities and any plans they have for the near future as relates to work, studies, research, etc. Articles are also most welcome for consideration in this exciting and refreshing newsletter! So, hurry up, and tell us what you are doing!

BIRD HOTLINE 749957
eanhs@africaonline.co.ke

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Grey Crested Helmeted Shrike, one of Kenya's threatedened birds, seen by Fleur Ng'weno and Catherine Ngarachu, NAKURU NP/ FEB.

Crowned Eagle, taking Skyes monkey baby, by Anthony M. Gachai, OLOLUA FOREST/ FEB

Rufous Crowned Roller, by Joseph Kariuki, GITHUNGURI, KIAMBU/ FEB

Please send unusual sightings to 'Kenya Birds' where if accepted they are published with full reference.

MARCH DIARY

Wed 3 Birdwalk

Sat 6 Hyrax Hill BISEU outing. Succulenta talk & plant and book sale Arbuko Sokoke birdwalk.

Mon 8 FONA AGM

Wed 10 Birdwalk

Sat 13 Bamburi Nature Trail Outing

Wed 17 Birdwalk

Sun 21 Pot Luck Outing

Wed 24 Birdwalk

THU 25 90 ANNIVERSARY JUBILEE

Mon 29 Tree Walk

Wed 31 Arabuko Sokoke walk & Nairobi Birdwalk

'A FIGURE OF SPEECH'
Some definitions revised:

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.
COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.
GOSSIP: A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage.
MOSQUITO: An insect that makes you like flies better.
SECRET: Something you tell to one person at a time.
TOMMORROW: One of the greatest labour saving devices of today.

90th Anniversary Retrospective

Ninety years ago on March 25, a little group of scientists and amateur scientists met in a room in Nairobi. They agreed to form the 'East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society' to promote the study of natural history – animals, plants and their environment. The minutes of that first meeting can be seen today in the office of Nature Kenya – the East Africa Natural History Society.

The First 30 years

In those days, the study of natural history often meant collecting animals and plants. From the collections, species could be identified and distribution mapped. The members of the EANHS decided to rent a room where they could store their collections. The specimens were then available to any member who wanted to study them.

As the EANHS members gathered information, there was a need to disseminate it. So the *Journal of the East Africa Natural History Society* began. Its first issue was published in 1910. This Journal, too, can be seen in the offices of Nature Kenya at the National Museums, in Nairobi.
The collections grew more numerous and more valuable, and the members saw the need to share them with the nation as a whole. They therefore entered into negotiations with the then colonial government to establish a Museum of Natural History. The collections of the EANHS would form the core of the Museum. In 1939 the Coryndon Memorial Museum was founded, later became the National Museum

The Middle Years

As the 'parent' of the Museum, the East Africa Natural History Society maintained close links with it. The Journal, now called the *Journal of East African Natural History*, is published jointly by the Society and the Museums. The Library, with its invaluable collection of old and new books and periodicals, is managed jointly by the Museum and the Society.

Scientists at the Museum, the Herbarium, and the Royal College (which became the University of Nairobi), remained active in the EANHS. From the beginning, however, amateurs – people with no special training but with an interest in nature – played an important part in all its activities. For instance, Priscilla Allen, a librarian by profession, organised outings over decades, and was instrumental in the formation of the East Africa Natural History Society in Uganda and the Ethipian Wildlife and Natural History Society.

In the early days of Kenya's independence, outstanding scientists such as Leslie Brown, Thomas Odhiambo, Malcolm Coe and Andrew Agnew introduced the Society to a wider audience. Long before 'the environmental movement' the EANHS was producing and publishing environmental information, under the chairmanship of John Karmali and later John Kokwaro.

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AAR
AAR SUPPORTS THE EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Conservation Years

It is mainly in the last 30 years that scientists have realized that it is not enough to study biodiversity. If living things, landscapes and ecosystems are to continue to give us joy, knowledge, goods and services, they need to be conserved.

During these years, the activities of the East Africa Natural History Society have increasingly shifted towards action for biodiversity conservation. Research continues, through the work of members in the Museums, Universities and research institutions; and through various studies of birds involving a wide range of Society members. At the same time, EANHS conservation action programmes include:

Education and awareness, including weekly bird-watching walks in Nairobi, monthly outings and lectures, events such as World Birdwatch, and cooperation with Earthwatch and Tropical Biology Association.

Publications, include the *Journal*, the *EANHS Bulletin, Kenya Birds, Scopus, Ballya, Tree News* and the *Newsletter*.

Site-support projects, including the Kipepeo butterfly farming project in support of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest at the Coast; Friends of Nairobi Arboretum and Friends of City Park in Nairobi; International conservation projects, such as Important Bird Areas, which seeks to conserve sites that are important for birds and other living things.

The Way Forward

The new millenium will bring new challenges. To prepare to meet them, the East Africa Natural History Society has changed the name of its Kenya operations to Nature Kenya, and is recruiting new members. Its strength, for 90 years, has been in its members.